

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 9, 2020

THE TRIODION BEGINS

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

### THE TRIODION BEGINS TODAY.

The Triodion is the Church's hymnbook for the period from now, through Great Lent, until Pascha. The next three weeks are meant to prepare us for Great Lent that begins on Monday, March 2ND.

**THIS COMING WEEK** is totally fast-free.

**PITA BAKING.** We're working to rebuild our pita stock after our successful holiday baking sales. There's a **pita baking session** Wednesday, February 12TH, 9:00 AM to NOON. **Questions?** Chris Toda at thetodas@msn.com and Betty Anderson at bettya16@verizon.net.

**THE SOUPER BOWL FUNDRAISER FOR IOCC** by the youth of the parish has been moved to **NEXT Sunday**, February 16TH.

**SNOW TUBING FOR YOUTH** during Vacation week, **Thursday, February 20TH, 11 AM.** For details, check out the flier or talk to **Valarie Stamoulis:** valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com

**WE ARE SADDENED** to learn of two recent deaths in our St. Nicholas family.

**GREETERS TEAM 4:**  
V. GERALD BELBA & ROSE SALERNO

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:**  
**HELP NEEDED**

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE TRIODION BEGINS

EPISTLE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-15 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 18:10-14  
(THE PARABLE OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 1

☩ Nikolaos Karadimitriou, the father of Kosmas Karadimitriou, fell asleep in the Lord on January 22nd in Greece.

☩ Aimilianos Mavroudis, the father of Anthi Eleftheriou, fell asleep in the Lord this past Sunday, February 2nd.

*We extend to them and their families* our deepest sympathies, and pray to our good and loving Lord to rest their souls among the righteous.

**OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is Friday, February 21ST. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), NOON Thursday. **Prep** help needed (2 persons), NOON Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30pm Friday. **We are also looking for donors to cover**

the cost of the meal—around \$400.00 for the 200 meals we usually serve. If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

### THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT

#### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Feb 9	Publican & Pharisee. Triodion begins
Week of Feb 9	No Fasting
Wed, Feb 12	Pita Baking, 9AM-NOON
Sat, Feb 15	Youth Souper Bowl Prep, 2PM
Sun, Feb 16	IOCC Souper Bowl Fundraiser
Thurs, Feb 20	Youth Snow Tubing, 11AM
Fri, Feb 21	Mustard Seed Meal, 5PM
Sat, Feb 22	Saturday of Souls
Sun, Feb 23	Meatfare Sunday
Sat, Feb 29	Staff Food Pantry 9AM-NOON
Sun, March 1	Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday
Mon, March 2	Great Lent begins
Sat, March 7	Staff Food Pantry 9AM-NOON
	Sun of Orthodox Vespers, 6PM
Sun, April 19	Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

**THEOPHANY.** PLEASE NOTE we will be scheduling House Blessings differently this year. Fr. Nick will be blessing houses through January and February. If you would like him to bless your home, please contact him either by e-mail ([frnick@stnicholaschurch.org](mailto:frnick@stnicholaschurch.org)) or on his cell: 508-335-7378 in order to set up a time.

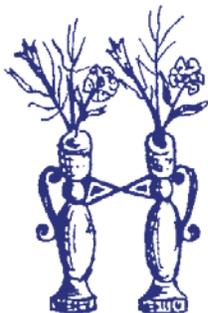
**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS** for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9AM to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. We have two Saturdays coming up: February 29TH and March 7TH.

The latest issue of the Archdiocesan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. *Pick one up and take it home!*

**COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED** for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you would like to sponsor one.

**A MEMORIAL IS CELEBRATE TODAY** for the servant of God Dimitraq Lolo, fallen asleep two years. *May his memory be eternal!*

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by the Lolo family in memory of Dimitraq Lolo.



## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity provides a comprehensive rehabilitation program of **Physical, Occupational and Speech/Language Therapies**. Call 508-852-1000 for more information.

**DIVINE LITURGY** is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30AM. And please always keep Holy Trinity Nursing Home, it's staff, directors, residents, and families in your prayers.

**HOLY TRINITY** is a non-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center and a project of the Council of Orthodox Churches of Central MA. Please keep Holy Trinity in your prayers and in your charitable plans. Contributions to the Treasured Generations Annual Fund can be made at [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net) and volunteers are welcome to be a part of Holy Trinity by contacting: Dana Spinney, Activities Director, at 508-852-1000 or e-mail: [dspinney@htnr.net](mailto:dspinney@htnr.net).

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O** HEAVENLY FATHER, maker and benefactor of our life: By your inscrutable love and power you abide in the depths of our hearts, unseen and unheard, waiting for us to meet you there. But we live constantly on the surface of things, never entering the deeper waters even of our own existence. Help us to be conscious of this and to respond in a real way to this great mystery of life, for you alone hold the meaning and purpose of our existence.

By the grace and mercies and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



# GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER!

**T**HIS week we begin the Triodion Period. The *Triodion* is the Church's hymnbook for the Lenten season. From now until Pascha we will read and sing from it to supplement the hymns typically sung in Vespers and Matins. The Gospel lesson for this first Sunday of the Triodion is Jesus' parable of the Publican (tax collector) and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). It is a story showing us the innermost thoughts swirling in the hearts and minds of these two people. It is a story of truth and self-deception. It is a story intended to prepare us for the season of repentance.

At its core it is a very simple story. The Lord tells us that "two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector" (v. 10). The Pharisee prayed in the usual manner: he lifted his eyes and hands toward Heaven and then began to recount his good works. He prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income" (v. 11-12). By contrast, the tax collector didn't even lift his head up. Bowing low he prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (v. 13) Jesus tells those listening that it was the tax collector who was justified in the eyes of God, not the Pharisee. No doubt that when he said this the Lord shocked those who heard him.

On one level the Pharisee was telling the truth. He did try to the best of his ability to follow the Law, that is, the rules of pious behavior outlined by Moses. However the Lord is asking his listeners to go beyond external behavior; he wants people to look to the heart of the matter, to look into their own hearts. This is the meaning of "all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted" (v. 14). We always stand on spiritual quicksand when we think that we are better than we actually are.



This story is a parable. It is designed to paint the picture not with subtle, but rather, with strong lines so that we might more easily understand the meaning. We recognize that the Pharisee is exhibiting a certain kind of pridefulness and the tax collector a particular form of humility. The challenge for us is to recognize both of these characteristics in ourselves. How might we avoid the pride of the one while cultivating the humility of the other?

As only St. John Chrysostom could observe, he says that in a way the tax collector is not humbling himself, but rather simply acknowledging the truth. He is stating the facts. He is honestly assessing himself. He recognizes his sin. The first step toward understanding humility is a deep, perhaps even brutally honest assessment of yourself. No delusions, no illusions, and no excuses. It is a very difficult thing to do.

St. John Chrysostom offers us something else to consider. He says that if someone calls us "names" we shouldn't react at all. On some level and in some way the accusation is more than

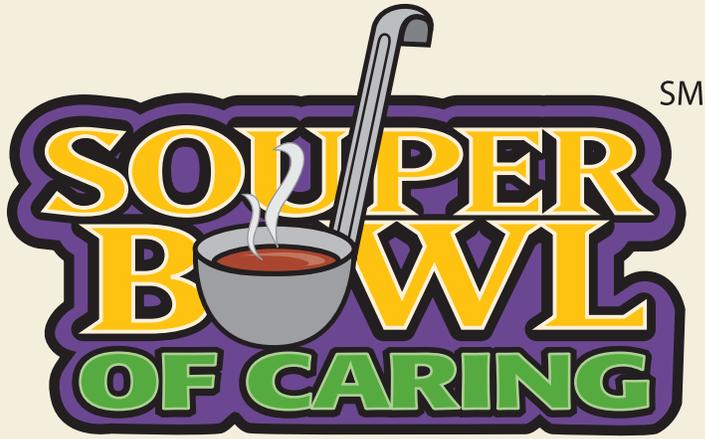
likely true. This may in fact be the very reason we react. We recognize a certain truth in it, and are embarrassed.

Of course this honest assessment works both ways. It is false humility not to acknowledge the gifts that we have and the good that we do. Sinners we may be, but we are not wholly without redeeming qualities. What the Pharisee said was not a lie. He did fast. He did tithe. His problem was that he compared himself to other people, and in so doing he felt as though he were better than they. Yet, to recognize that we have a particular gift, or to feel good about the fact that we've helped someone is, if we are careful, a way to grow further in goodness and holiness. But, to brag about a gift we have, or some good we've done, is self-serving and prideful. We understand this best when we see it displayed in someone else. The real challenge is to see it in ourselves.

Of course there is another dimension to consider, namely the source of our gifts. If we are gifted at something — say as a superb athlete, clever in business, or able to sing like an angel — are we truly responsible for that gift? Are we really to be credited? Or, is it but an example of the many things God has given us, a talent that we improve upon? If we do good, help the poor, visit the sick, should we broadcast it about, even to ourselves? Or, should we quietly rejoice in the power given us by God to assist another?

As we prepare ourselves for our Lenten journey toward Pascha, our first task is to make this sort of spiritual self-assessment; to look into our hearts, honestly; to acknowledge our strengths and our failings; and finally, to have the courage to make this simple prayer to our Heavenly Father: God, be merciful to me a sinner!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2020

## Together we can beat hunger.

Help feed the hungry by collecting nonperishables for a local food bank, and collect money for IOCC to support our work around the globe. Together we can turn the biggest weekend in football into a super day of giving!

Learn more at  
[iocc.org/souperbowl](http://iocc.org/souperbowl)



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES  
P.O. Box 17398 | Baltimore, MD 21297-0429 | Toll-Free: 877.803.4622

## ATTENTION ALL YOUNG PEOPLE!

We are planning a "soup making" day at St Nicholas on Saturday, February 15<sup>TH</sup> from 2:00 PM-6:00 PM. We will be prepping the soup that Saturday to serve Sunday, February 16<sup>TH</sup> during coffee hour to raise money for IOCC.

After prepping the soup and cleaning up, we will celebrate Vespers followed by pizza dinner for the kids.

This event will be for third graders and older. We're looking forward to having all the kids together. Please tell Valarie Stamoulis if you'll be able to make it.

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